89. Suggestions regarding education.

MR. K. S. DHARMA RAJA AIYAR (*Member, Municipal Council, Alleppey*) pleaded for the introduction of Sanskrit translation as an alternative subject for Vernacular composition in the English School Leaving Certificate Scheme. Travancore was once famous for its Sanskrit learning ; advocates of the Vernacular need not fear that the encouragement of Sanskrit would do harm to their cause. The change proposed obtained in the Madras Presidency and Cochin, and was unanimously recommended by the last Headmasters' conference. That Sanskrit could be presented as an optional subject for the examination was not enough as could be judged from the number of students taking that up. Sanskrit should be taught from the lowest class of Secondary Schools and Vernacular may be taught in addition. Pupils migrating to or from foreign schools were handicapped by the present arrangement. Universities in northern India insisted on a knowledge of Sanskrit in their students.

Nature Study under the Travancore School Final Examination Scheme corresponded to elementary science elsewhere, with this difference, that the former was a subject for public examination while the latter was not. It was hard that a candidate should be obliged to attain a prescribed minimum in elementary mathematics and Nature Study together and subjected to the additional strain of having to prepare an extra subject for the public examination. Nature Study need not in fact be one of the subjects for the public examination.

The syllabus in Physics required revision. A general survey of the whole subject would be more useful and interesting than an elaborate or intensive study of dynamics and heat.

Elsewhere, the two optional histories were divided into three epochs and detailed study of any one epoch and non-detailed study of the other two were prescribed for each year ; while in Travancore, the whole period was set for detailed study. This should be changed.

The High School staff should be adequately represented on the School Final Board and the Text Book Committee. They possessed first hand knowledge of the psychology of the child and the condition of secondary education. Fifty per cent. of the members should be chosen from the teachers of secondary schools.

The teaching profession should be represented in the Legislative Council and the Popular Assembly. Government should make such nominations.

The Headmasters' conference inaugurated during the administration of Dewan Mr. (now Sir) P. Rajagopala Chari had done useful work. A definite pronouncement on its future should be made.

Teachers in elementary schools were paid so low that they found it difficult even to live a precarious life. Even a postman got a higher pay than the Travancore Vernacular School teacher. Their salaries should be increased.

There ought to be Vernacular as well as Anglo-vernacular Schools. Children of the middle classes would prefer the latter kind of institution for their children. The former should provide free education to the poor in the three R's. Such separation obtained elsewhere, English being taught from Class II ; and the result was that the standard in English of the Travancore pupil who had to study all his English in the course of an year in the Preparatory class was lower than that of the Cochin pupil.

DEWAN'S REPLY : Mr. Dharmaraja Aiyar, I shall think over the question of the Headmasters who want to confer and see whether it is necessary or desirable or expedient to summon a conference again.

2. There are several other points which you took up. The encouragement of Sanskrit amounted to the substitution of Sanskrit translation for Vernacular translation. That is a point which will be referred to the Director of Public Instruction. So also will the question of Nature Study, and the question of Optional Physics and Indian History. All these will be referred to the Director of Public Instruction for his views. He will also consider, as I daresay he has considered, the question of the representation of the Headmasters on the Board of Examiners and the Text Book Committee.

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3. As regards the representation of teachers on the Legislative Council, as far as private school teachers go, I do not think there is any objection to their standing for election.

90. Vernacular Education.

MR. K. PARAMESVARA PANIKKAR (*Member, Shertallai taluk, Group I*) said that the minimum qualification for a teacher in Elementary Schools should be the English School Leaving Certificate, the syllabus in Secondary Schools being vernacularised. The medium of instruction should be the Vernacular. Classes V to IX of Vernacular Schools should be amalgamated with English Schools. Vocational education should be given in these schools. Practical training in agriculture should be imparted, farms, three or four acres in extent being attached to each school. Other changes were also necessary in the syllabus, which should be considered by a committee of educational experts. Land development should be encouraged by various means and unemployment reduced by industrial undertaking.

Opinion, official and popular, was unanimous that the pay of Vernacular School teachers should be enhanced adequately. Their position was deplorable not only when compared with the condition in foreign countries like Germany or Japan, but also if regard is had to the recent increase in prices, their heavy responsibilities, the duty of the State to maintain them properly and the salaries obtaining in other departments. Half-starved teachers failed to command respect or evoke enthusiasm. The teachers in Travancore, however, had done good work in the cause of popular education by organizing libraries, etc. The number of teachers was certainly an obstacle in the way of raising their pay. The minimum pay should, however, be fixed at Rs. 18. For women teachers a time-scale of pay rising up to Rs. 25 should be given. Trained teachers should be given Rs. 25 to Rs. 30. Headmasters of Middle Schools should be given Rs. 45 *plus* Rs 5; the starting pay of a trained Vernacular Higher teacher should be Rs. 30.

The above proposals would cost Rs. 4 lakhs a year. The regular annual increase of Rs. 2 lakhs under customs, Rs. ·5 lakh received on account of the rebate of duty on *ganja*, Rs. 2·5 lakhs on account of opium rebate, and the increase of Rs. 1·5 lakhs anticipated under tobacco, would together amount to Rs. 6·5 lakhs, thus leaving a balance of Rs. 2·5 lakhs for other contingencies.

Retrenchment was possible in some directions. The Training College was probably a superfluity. At any rate, teachers need not be given stipends to get themselves trained, as training brought with it increase of pay. L. T.'s trained at their own cost might be recruited in future. The opening and management of educational institutions might be devolved on private agencies. The publication of text-books might bring in some revenue. Schools which overlapped might be abolished. The extension of the 'shift system' would only increase the mortality among half-starved teachers. A sympathetic consideration of the condition of Vernacular School teachers was necessary.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Parameswara Panikkar, in regard to the pay of the Vernacular School teachers, I have nothing to add to what I have already said to-day in reply to Mr. Kanakku Martanda Pillai Parameswaran Pillai, the Member for Chirayinkil taluk, Group I. In regard to your representations on specific matters relating to teachers, those are matters which, I am sure, the Director of Public Instruction will take up and if necessary refer to the Government. As regards the Rs. 6·5 lakhs you want the Excise Commissioner to provide, may I ask you if you can provide the numerous lakhs which will disappear when you impose prohibition?

The Assembly adjourned at 4-55 P. M., to meet again at 11-30 A. M., on Saturday, the 27th February, 1926.

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